

Michael Paskas

Q: Today is March the 8th; we're interviewing Michael Paskas.
Michael, where does your family come from in Greece?

A: They came from Samos, from the island of Samos.

Q: Your mother and father?

A: No, my father from Samos; my mother was born in Piraeus.

Q: And what prompted them to come?

A: My -- let me see, my uncle, how old -- my three uncles who were here, and they called -- my mother was their cousin, so they wrote to my mother and told her to come to the United States, they said they had a husband for her. So my mother left from Piraeus and came here, met my father, and they got married. It was a (inaudible).

Q: For your mother and your father, right. But why did your father come here originally?

A: They came here because they thought they were going to find a better living than they were doing in Samos. Things were going quite badly at the time, and they came here one at a time, the three brothers.

Q: What year did they come?

A: I would say in the very early, early '20s, because I think my mother got married in '24, so they must have.

Q: When did they arrive -- oh, I said that. How old were you -- well, you were born here, right?

A: I was born here. I was born at [Brecknell] Place in Newark, which is now West Market Street.

Q: And what year were you -- you don't have to tell that.

A: No, that's all right. I'll tell you. I was born in 1937, I think, or '38. (laughter) (inaudible)

M: He's younger than I am. How about 1923?

Q: (laughter)

(overlapping dialogue, inaudible)

Q: What was their original point of entry when they came to this country?

A: They came through Ellis Island, my mother came through Ellis Island. About my father, I didn't know too much.

Q: No?

A: No. My father died, I was a year old. He was 34 years old when he died, so we never did have a father. My sister Sophie raised most of us.

Q: How come they settled in Newark?

A: They didn't. First they were -- you know, in those days, wherever the relative was, right, come here. So they went to Waterloo, Iowa, and then for some reason, wasn't doing

too well, and then one of the other brothers now calls and he says come down here, and they were working, they got him a job at the steel company in Harrison, on Harrison Avenue. And that's where my father worked for a while.

Q: What did your mother do after you --

A: Crucible Steel, that's where it was. And they were working. And my mother, of course, was raising four children. But then of course my father died, my mother couldn't speak the language very well, but she was very fortunate that she had a lady friend that took her to New York, and my mother must have had some training in being a seamstress. So she was working there on the mink coats, she was a finisher, she would put the linings in. We were very, very fortunate, because it was a good paying job, but it was season. And she didn't, not knowing the language or anything, we didn't have welfare, we didn't have anything like that to maintain us. But she made enough money for the maybe six or seven months that she worked, and then she would put the money away, and it would carry us through the three months when she did nothing at all. And then of course as we, we all fend for ourselves. My mother would leave the house in the morning, she'd be up at 6:00 and out, and then she'd return again 8:00 at night. When I was very, very young, my sister

would put me to bed. She would feed me, put me to bed. The only time I saw my mother was on weekends, because she was working ten hours a day. And then gradually, we grew up, each one of us. Sophie, my sister, started to work part-time, and then I was in school; in fact, most of them had to leave school, because they had to work. I think I'm the only one that went through high school out of the four of us.

Q: What schools did you go to?

A: I went to Warren Street School. I went to Central Avenue. I went to [Robert Tree] because it was a junior high. Then I went to Central High, and I graduated from there.

Q: Did you belong to any Greek or American organizations as you were growing up?

A: Yes, we had the Pansamiam organization or something, Pythagora, something or other. In fact, at one time I was one of the officers, I went even to some conventions. Later on, that is. But then even that gradually fizzled out. The older people died off, the younger people didn't want to go, such as we're seeing today. And that then was that.

Q: Any other organizations?

A: No. We didn't belong to any other. Well, I joined the AHEPA, but that was much later, and the Legion, the same

thing, much later. Most of it, I think myself and most of the friends that we had from that area, it took off after we got back from the war. Because during the war, yeah, we had formed a little -- our own little club down there, I think we were called the Green Hornets or something like that. And strangely enough, we were young kids, and we went around, raised money, ran a dance, and we all had sweaters on. (inaudible) the [Juvelisses], and we all walked around with our red sweaters, and we all must have been maybe 14, 15 years old. We built a clubhouse in that back of an empty lot.

Q: What did the Green Hornets do?

A: Nothing. Nothing. We were just a gang. Some other things I could think I don't think you want to put that on tape.

Q: Well, you can put it on tape, and we will not put anything on that -- you will get approval.

A: Oh, all right. We were the best-equipped baseball team in the entire area.

Q: Why wouldn't I want to know that?

A: Well, because we used to go Bamberger's and come out with the baseballs and the gloves. We didn't have the money to buy them. So that was how we were so well-equipped. I remember this like it was yesterday. I remember honestly

leaving Bamberger's, and we had one of the members that would be walking like this, he had a baseball bat in his pants, we're walking out like that.

Q: (laughter) OK. So your team, was it like a gang that played baseball?

A: Yeah, we just played baseball. Sometimes we had football. I was the only one with cleats, I don't know where I got them, and we would go to [Branch Brook Park] and play.

Q: Yeah, these are things we want to know. We don't have to say who it was, we could put that in here. Did you belong to any American organizations?

A: No, we didn't. I don't think any of us did, if I think back. No.

Q: How about in high school? Did you play any --

A: Yeah, in high school -- I've got to look at my book. I think we were -- Bill [Zerbakis], Pete [Perchelils] and I were a team; wherever we went, the three of us went together, one on either side because I was in the middle -- they were all taller than I, both of them were taller than I was. And we went all through Robert Tree School and Central High together, the three of us. No, but I don't remember any organization. We fooled around a little bit in the

school with some of the classes, one of the debating teams we were on, things like that. But nothing --

Q: Did you play sports? Any sports?

A: No. No sports. None, neither one, none of us. In fact, none of our group. It's surprising, none of our group did, that I can think of.

Q: Did you have any American friends?

A: Come to think of it, no. We had some Italian friends from the [Backend Academy] street that we would play with, yes, we would skate with. But mostly, we were the Greek children. When we went out, we would go down to the theaters and sneak into the theaters, but we always -- (inaudible) the Paramount? No, the Paramount we wouldn't fool around with, because they were Greeks. But we used to go into the Branford Theater, there was alleyway and we would sneak into the Branford. But it was always Greek fellows, Greeks, always. I don't ever remember going down with -- (inaudible), always Greeks.

Q: To what church did you belong to?

A: Well, my grandmother used to take me to St. Demetrius Church. That's when it was on -- I guess from the time when I was born, I was baptized in St. Demetrius Church. And my grandmother, because there were four of us, and my mother

couldn't -- it was real difficult, one of my sisters went to live with my grandmother, because she was all alone. And she was my father's mother.

Q: And where did she live?

A: She lived on Bank Street. And so I would go down on weekends sometimes and stay with my sister and my grandmother. My sister Sophie -- my brother Johnny then was old enough, he would be out working or doing something or whatnot. So my mother would at least be left alone for awhile, and she didn't have to buy as much food, either.

Q: When did your grandmother come to the United States?

A: I don't know.

Q: Did she come with -- or did they bring her --

A: They must have brought. You know, I said 1923, that's wrong. My sister was born in 1917, so no, they came -- my mother must have come over just right after the First World War. That's when she probably came over.

Q: So it was in the teens. Your sister was born here in 1917.

A: 1917, sure. And I was born in '23. And of course my sister was the first child, so it had to be -- my mother must have come like '14, '15. But I'm guessing it was right after the war that she came over. And the uncle that I had that wrote

to her, he was in the war, so he must have -- when he came out, he must have written to her then, and she came. They were first cousins. He was a Samian also, and he wrote to my mother.

Q: He went into the First World War here or in Greece?

A: No, no. Here.

Q: Oh, so then they had to be here early.

A: Yes. That's right, I would guess then my father must have been here about that time too. So maybe we're back to 1912, something right around there, let's say 19-- I should have checked them more thoroughly.

Q: That's all right. We have time. You just -- once we write this all up and send it out, you can add things to it. And if you think of things after we finish, just send -- write to us, or give it to us.

A: Because I still have two pistols that my uncle brought back from the war, but it was like those blunderbuss kind, and he had them hanging in his wall with his steel helmet. That would have been even -- I don't know what ever happened, my aunt gave me the guns, which you're afraid it fires, I think it'll blow up. But it's a nice antique anyway.

Q: But if we have an exhibit, it would be nice --

A: Oh, yes, I'll bring it down, yeah. And he brought them from Greece, and they were used during the Greek Revolution, against the Turks, it was used.

Q: So all of that is --

A: Yeah. I'll be happy to bring them down, yeah.

M: You lived on West Market Street? What area -- what to what time?

A: Oh, we lived almost primarily, but we switch -- I think most everybody did, we switched around, we were on Nelson Place for a while, my grandmother lived there with my uncle and the whole family then. I think my father lived there too, because -- this might sound very strange to you -- I could almost swear I remember my father, when he died, they had him laid out in the living room. And I was crawling around a little bit, just about walking, and somehow I seem to remember that corner. I could have been just mistaken about that. So we were on Nelson Place, and then we moved to West Market Street, up above, a little bit above. There, we were with the [Mackrisses] and the [Petins], right next door to the Patins. And we stayed there for a while. It was a cold water flat. But then my mother was doing quite well, and we were out working a little bit, so we moved down and we got steam heat. And our apartment, the building we lived in was

right next door to the [Juvelisses], the [Giovannises], all them. Well, theirs wasn't, so they used to come and sit in our hall a lot to keep warm, because the house would be warm all the time. Then from there, we went into the Army. And from the Army, we moved up to Irvington.

Q: You went into the Second World War, right?

A: Oh, yes, we were in the second war. And we have -- (inaudible) and his mother was saving, she had cut out from the ledger what boys were leaving at that time to go to war, and his name was there and so was mine, so they must have been grabbing us all at one time right from that area, and we went in. [Boneo] went into the Navy, I went into the Army.

Q: Do you have that article, or --?

A: I think Boneo still has it, and I'll see if we can get it.

M: What year was that? '41? '42?

A: No -- 1941, no -- it must have been '42, because I think I got out in '44, '43. No, it might have been '41, the latter part of '41.

Q: So your father worked in the steel --

A: My father worked in the steel mill, Crucible Steel on Harrison.

Q: And then your mother worked in New York as --

A: After he died. He died, yeah, as a seamstress. For years, she worked there for about 30 years. And by this time, we were old, so my mother just stayed home, and we took care of the expenses and whatnot.

Q: And what does your sister do?

A: My sister Sophie became a wife. She married Nicky Jarvis, and she was just -- she was working while we were in the Army, because that was about her age, my brother, myself, she was working, and my other sister Mary was also working. But my sister Mary was more not with us, because she grew up with my grandmother. And it wasn't that far away, it was on Bank Street. But she went to school down there; she didn't go to school with us, she went to school down there, she made friends down there, whereas Sophie didn't. Sophie made friends with the people, she went to St. Nicholas Church, she was in the choir for many, many years. I have to say this also, she had a nice voice, and still has. But Mary --

Q: What schools did Mary go to?

A: She went to this one down on James Street in Newark, because it was near her house, near Bank Street. And that's where she went. So because we were near Bank Street, I guess that might have been even -- I think, and the church was on Bank

Street, St. Demetrius Church. I think at that time, St. Nicholas was on Academy Street, up high. So who had a car in those days? The closest place. So that's where I went to Greek school, down on Bank Street. And then from there, we moved -- well, we stayed there, but the church moved to New Street, and the other one and into the other one and into the other one. But that's where we grew up, right on Bank Street, right near the church. But there was a lot of Greeks right in that vicinity also, but it was half Italian there. Bank Street had Italian on one side and then Greeks on the other, many. So my sister Mary got to know most of her friends who were Italian, because they were right there, right across the street.

Q: And your brother?

A: My brother went all over. By that time, he was still -- he stayed in the Army for quite awhile, and then he came home, and he got a job with Harry [Reedis], and he was working down in Newark and the [Whale and Struck] store, if you remember them. He was a short-order man. And he was doing that for many, many years. And then of course finally he got married too.

Q: His wife works at the drugstore on West Orange?

A: No. That's Pat's brother.

Q: Oh, that's Pat's brother. OK.

A: That's Ann. That was another one. Her brother -- her other brother, John, was in the war, he wound up out in Colorado, and he met a young lady there, and before you know it, they had a farm and all, he marries her. Then he writes to his brother, come on out and visit. The brother goes out to visit and marries the sister. (laughter) And you know, that's the people you want to talk to. My wife and I, sometimes we talk about the Depression, so she's going, what depression? I said what do you mean what depression? There was no food there. She said we always had -- well, they had a farm. She says we always had ham, we always had steak, we always had -- we don't know what you mean.

Q: Did Pat ever live in Newark?

A: No. Pat was born and raised in the Oranges.

Q: In the Oranges. That's what I thought.

A: You know, that's a good question. I don't know just where in the Oranges she was born, in which hospital. But I know she was born right there, and her whole family --

Q: What hospital were you born in? Or at home?

A: I was born at home. I was born in the house. And I was baptized, my birth certificate says, "[Pershalis M. Pershalis]." Paskas Paskas. I was baptized [Paskati]. And

so when I went, was in the sixth and seventh grade, the kids used to tease me. By that time, my father had died way before that, so I said, this is ridiculous. So the next place I went to, name? Michael Paskas. But some of the older Greek women, if you notice, they still call me [Paskalati].

Q: Oh, I wondered why. I thought they were just using your last name.

A: No. They used to wheel me, when my mother was working, they would take care of me sometimes. Mrs. [Motis], every time she -- (Greek). I don't remember that, of course. (laughter) But they used to take -- yeah, always.

Q: Did the Greeks take care of each other?

A: Very much so.

Q: You're the only one who -- the early -- for example, not you, what I'm saying, not your generation, but your father's generation. Did they help each other? Or was it the family that helped?

A: I think it was mostly the family that helped. I think -- they didn't have money to help. Some of them said, well, go into business. Who are you going to -- I'm going to come to you to borrow \$500, in those days, they try to borrow? You couldn't borrow it. Where now, when they bring relatives

over, they've got everything ready for them. Come on, right into the diner, wash the dishes, then do the salad, and then before you know it, he owns the diner. That's why we have so many diners. They've been passing them on from one to the other. The family chips in and helps them out.

Q: What did your brothers, your father's brothers, do?

A: One moved to Reading, Pennsylvania, and he had a restaurant out there. But strangely enough, all of my family died young. He was out in Reading, Pennsylvania. The other brother had a [cafenio], a coffee house. Which one was that? My father and the three brothers -- what the hell was the other brother? Oh, the other brother was Gus. He had a cafenio.

Q: In Newark?

A: In Newark. He took my father in; together, they had the cafenio. And then I think my father died, my uncle ran it by himself. That uncle never worked. He was always in the cafenio business. Always. Then he owned the one, 152 Market Street, and he owned one on Bank Street. And then in fact just before I went into the Army, I was just at the right age, I'd be down at the coffeehouse. And then once in awhile, when it was quiet and we had players there, I would be the dealer for them.

M: What did they call the cafenio? Do you remember?

A: It was never called anything. Cafenio. My uncle was known as [opasarosh]. He ran it. But I used to deal for the card players in those days. I didn't even know how to play. But gradually watching the game, so he says come on down; I would go down, and then he'd give me two dollars or something. But I was still in the early teens.

Q: Did you work after school when you were going to high school?

A: I worked in the Paramount Theater, and I worked in the Adams Theater. That was glory. Especially the Paramount Theater was hard, you had to work hard, you couldn't watch the movie, you had to lift --

Q: Did Adams own the Paramount?

A: Oh, yes. Tom Adams, we would be coming in and out, he used to work in the office, Manny Adams and I stood up at the balconies and climbing the stairs. But -- do you know Peter [Blakes], by any chance? He was a son of a gun. Him and his brothers --

Q: Tony?

A: Tony. Tony started working before us, and he became a captain, the captain of the ushers. And then Peter was up, he moved up and he became chief of staff, which means he was

in charge of all the ushers. So you'll see movies there, and you're standing up on the thing with the big flashlight in your hand. It's quiet, so, I saw you, "We're closed tonight." Pete used to catch us if we were watching the movie. That means at 9:00, when the theater is finished, and no more coming in, but it's not going to close until 11:00. So 9:00 until 11:00, you had to work free, because he caught me looking. They were terrible.

Q: How much did you make?

A: I made \$.37 -- I made \$12.00 for 48 hours a week. \$12.00 and some change.

M: He hired a lot of Greeks?

A: Yeah. Oh, Tony worked there -- well, of course Tony. But they tell me some of them that were there, I was there for a long time, I don't remember them being there that often, that much. They said remember, I was there, I don't -- and I was there long. Then Adams bought out the Adams Theater on Branford Place, and that was -- oh, that was, God -- it was all shows came in, it was open only three days a week, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. So if you were real good at the Paramount, and this -- I want this not to come out, but if you paid at the Paramount, whoever the captain of the ushers at that time, not necessarily Tony, if you gave him a

couple of bucks, he'd send you to the Adams. And then the Adams, we used to have these shows, Tommy Dorsey, you name them, all of them there. And the girls used be flocking, man, we were like in heaven. Girls all over the place. It was one of the nicest times of our life, honestly.

M: That's interesting.

A: It was great. But then we got drafted.

Q: Any other jobs after school?

A: No. Even before -- no. That's the first job I got. In fact, I was still working -- still in school at Central High. And I used to go sometimes on the weekends, that's when the theater was usually busy, and I would go sometimes on a holiday and I would work there. No, I did work a short time for an outfit that made gold -- not the ring -- the thing that holds the diamond in it, in place.

Q: The prongs?

A: No. The thing on the top. It's like a little thing like this --

Q: The prongs.

A: Yeah, but these were straight. It'll come to me. But anyway, I worked there, and from there, I went into the Army. But right just before the Army, I worked in a machine

shop, because it was -- the war had started, and I was doing some more products. But I was very short, and they drafted me before I could do much more. But that was it. Then when I came out of the Army, I was (inaudible), I had nothing to do. They were giving us \$20 a week, so I decided to become an actor.

M: Is that right?

A: Yeah. In a show -- there was a fellow by the name of -- (inaudible), but we called him Butch, and he lived on Summit Place. So he and I and another fellow went up, we started a theater group up in Cedar Grove, at Frank Daley's Meadowbrook. Remember that?

M: Yes.

A: So every summer, we used to (inaudible). They would close it off, no more food, and we built a stage. There was stairs there, we built a stage. And we would run a theater. First, we used to go out selling tickets and doing that, we did very bad. So finally one day we got up with the question -- no charge, just give what you want. The place used to fill, but they would put a dollar, two dollars in, we would walk by with the baskets, like they'd go to church, and collect the money. There's another place we had great times. We got to know some of the girls from Arthur

Murray's and Dale Studios, they would come up and spend the weekend. We rented -- I shouldn't be going into these things.

Q: Go ahead.

A: We rented a nice house right up in Hiawatha, Lake Hiawatha, which is up that way. And then --

Q: Does Pat know this?

A: No. (laughter) Outside, we used to make it a joke, and they would come up, the girls would come up and bring beer, and we would have -- and in the back, the landlord finally (inaudible) said you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. We had the cases packed like this, and then we built -- and then it went up like this, and the whole side of the house was empty cans of beer. The entire house. We had a great time. It was wonderful. Then of course that ended, so now what are we going to do? So we came down, and this is probably a little interesting. Pete Giovannis decided he was going to become a funeral director. So he went up -- the word must have been passed around, because (inaudible) kept looking around. In those days, it was very clannish. Irish went to Irish, no difference. Russians went to -- very clannish. But there were no Greek funeral directors, so they started -- in fact, [Rotundo] buried my father, he

buried my grandmother. So there was no Greeks, so everybody went to Rotundo.

M: He was off of Market Street, right?

A: Yeah. Rotundo had his funeral parlor in the house where I was born.

M: Oh, is that right?

A: 52 I think the number might have been. Now, old man [Litwin], he's looking to increase his business. He said, well, let me get a Greek, and then I can do some of the Greek business. So we're (inaudible) and I don't know, [Boniora cookie] we called him. But Peter, so he went up to get the job. So they said OK, and they started to sign him up. But then they says to him, "Have you graduated high school?" At that time, you had to be high school. Now it's college all of the sudden. So he hadn't finished high school, because he -- there was some problems, whatnot, he hadn't finished high school. So the Litwin says to him, "Well, when you finish high school, come back." In the meantime, [Banio] decided to get married, and he took off and whatnot, so he wasn't around. So then when he came back, he was working in his father's restaurant. And I had a job, because I had been disabled in the Army, they gave me a job down at the new airport, I used to drive the [colonel]

around. And I would work different hours, so if I worked late, and I would go by the restaurant, and I would help Banio once in awhile, coffee, we spent the time. So one day, we were sitting, he said, "Why don't you go up to Rotundo and Litmin, talk to them?" I said (inaudible), I wanted to be an undertaker. He says, "Go up and see." So I go up one day dressed up, and I went and I knocked on the door, and I says, "You were supposed to hire a gentleman by the name of Peter," I said, "but he can't make it, and I'm here to take his place." "Well, are you sure?" "Yeah." "All right. Come tomorrow morning." So I went the next morning, and they kept me like washing the cars first, and then little by little, I started driving the limousines. So every time we'd ask (inaudible) how do you like it, I said this is great, I get this limousine to ride around, where the hell am I going to get -- my car was broken --

(break in audio)

A: Is it on? -- So I liked driving the car. Now gradually they took me inside, and the first person -- I never saw dead people, you know. So I walked in there, I had one, and he says -- that little old man, I remember it like it was yesterday -- a little old man with a moustache -- in those days, they were [Ukies], the Ukrainians or Russians. He

says, "Come on it, you've got to help me dress him." Now, they had long johns on him. So I said, what do you mean, help him dress? "Well," he said, "come on in and I'll show you." So they put me on one side of the table, I was on the other, so they said, "Now, look. You just put your hand through there and touch the hand," and before you know it, little by little, before I started embalming, I think I was there a year before I saw that. And then gradually, where I was going to only stay three months -- see, I had to serve an apprenticeship of three years. It was compulsory. And then apprenticeship was like what it was in the medieval days. Honestly. There was no days off. I got \$14 -- in those days, people were making now \$40 and \$50; I was getting \$14 a day -- a week.

M: What year was this now? Like what year are we talking about? 1947, '46?

A: That's right. I went there in 1947, and then I finished -- or '46, because the Litman boys, the grandchildren, now are 50 years old, and they weren't born yet when I was there. So it was '46, I would think. And then I went through, because I got my license, I think, in '51 or '52. So that's all I was getting, \$14. But fortunately, we had the GI Bill in those days, and they were giving me a check every month,

I was getting a check of \$98 or something. And I was living with my sister Sophie, so I didn't have much expenses. But \$14 a week. And then the inspector would come around once every couple of months, he said, "You're supposed to get a raise. Tell them that you have to get a raise." So I would tell them, Mike Litman, I said, "Mike, if I don't get a raise, they're going to stop the check." And then a month would go by, and then another month; before you know it, three months would go by, "Oh, yeah, we got to give you --" Because the inspector would say, "If you don't get it, we're going to take your check away." So finally he would give me the three dollars. But in the meantime, I lost it like for three or four months. So little by little, then I got my license, then things were a lot easier. Then they hired me, once I had the license, there was no more of this, and then I was drawing a nice salary. And then of course I met my wife in St. Constantine in Helen Church, where my sisters belonged to the Daughters of Penelope. My wife was, as you know, my wife, she was quite outspoken. She used to tell her, don't any of you have any brothers or anything like that? So my sister would say, "Yeah, I have a brother, but he don't go out." So my sister says, "Why don't you," when the dance was going to take place, she said, "Go and look for this girl." It was at the church. And I remember at

the bar, and it was ready to close, "Oh, my God, I forgot to go." So I go over, and I find Father -- what's his name, the bald-headed guy? -- but anyway, he introduces me to --

M: Father Costa.

A: No, Vasilio.

M: Vasilio.

A: Come on, it's -- 1937, it's 1923. (laughter) So he introduced me to her, and then I asked her to get up and dance, and then I asked her for a date and whatnot, and then we got married. So in those days, once you die, the license expires. So I said this is terrible. I just started a business, and all of the sudden I go -- so Pat served her apprenticeship, but she served it under me. But of course, she didn't have to do what I was doing. But she finished her apprenticeship, she went to embalming school, and she got her license. And now she -- and then of course years later we had Michael, and now he's got his license. So we're a small, three-family -- but what happens, our business is not that big. And to have two families, which is Michael and ours, it's a little bit difficult to make it. So both he and I way back, we would almost hire out other funeral homes, which also, we have to hire once in awhile ourselves. Once in awhile when we get too busy, he can run

one funeral, and I may be able to run the other one, but who's going to take this one? So we have to call in one of our friends that have a funeral home, he's slow, he'll come and run the funeral, or he may even come to embalm. Very rarely, because Michael does it all. But on rare occasion, if Michael's out on a funeral, then we'll call an embalmer to come in and do it. So that's what even helps out more, because we do a great deal of -- we make a lot of extra money doing that work. And then sometimes it's just a pleasure to go out for another funeral director.

Q: I've got all the answers about the business. Did you hire any -- well, no, you didn't hire -- except for your family, there's no Greek-American who's in --

A: I think there's one down around [Asbury Park] or down around Tom's River someplace, and he tried, and it didn't work out too well. So I think he went into business with his father in the restaurant. But there's no other Greek funeral director in the state, because even then, it was, again, it was clannish. So you can't say, OK, you're going to go into business, and you have a call for this guy -- you don't get business. They don't come.

Q: And no Greek-American expressed an interest in becoming --

A: No, none of them. A couple of times, I would be very

truthful, and I would be truthful now, if they asked, I said, "Please, don't waste your time. Don't do it."

Because now the rules and regulations that have come to us, it's honestly, you almost have to hire somebody to do -- my wife was in the house, I would say she had a minimum of three to four hours every day, we had one room that's just an office, it's maybe a quarter of this room, it's large. And there's a fax machine, there's a typewriter, there's a photocopy machine. Everything's all lined up there. There's a laminating machine and all that. And we actually have the office right there in the house, and she's constantly in there. We get medical waste; we've got this, you got to do, you have this you have to do, you have this you have to do. And the consumer affairs comes around periodically and checks on us to be sure we're not overcharging, we're not doing this. So it doesn't pay anymore. And not only that, even if you want to, you want to buy a funeral business today, you're going to spend \$2-3 million.

Q: But I'm saying in the earlier years, after you became a funeral director, did any Greek-American express an interest to come and work for you, or --?

A: No. I tried, believe it or not, I tried. You know Charlie

[Kostakis]?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, he was talking to me, I said, "Come on, Charlie," and I made him a doorman, which means he stays -- when we have a funeral, somebody has to be there to direct the people which way to go. And he came once or twice, and I said, "Come on," "Nah, I don't think so"; he stopped, he didn't want to do it anymore.

Q: This was years ago?

A: Oh, many, many -- in fact, the part that I missed, once I had gotten my license, the Lipmans had hired me, and I did all their embalming at that time. So they says -- the father used to live on the second floor, and he says -- they brought me up to the office, they says, "We'd like to talk to you."

Q: This was when it was on Springfield Avenue.

A: So I says, "What is it?" He says, "Look," the father now says, "we bought a home in [Shore Hills], and we want to move. But somebody has to live in the funeral parlor. Do you want to live here?" So I said, "Let me talk to my wife." So I talked to Pat, I said, "What do you think, Pat?" She said, "I have no objections," we didn't have any children or anything, and the apartment was big.

Q: It was a big home.

A: Yeah. In fact, I think it's got four bedrooms, another floor up with bedrooms. So we moved in, and now we didn't have any rent to pay, we didn't have electricity, we didn't have gas, we didn't have -- it was air-conditioned. So that's where we really made money, because Pat went to work every morning, and I went to work downstairs, so we were drawing two salaries at the same time. And she worked for the government, and she really built up her -- she was doing very well when she finally stopped. So when my son was born, she stopped for a while. She worked for the ODB. When the war was out, she worked -- they gave her the key to close up. That's how long she was there. And then from there, she went to --

Q: The ODB?

A: Yeah. Office of Dependency Benefits. During the war, that's where she worked. You know that knew Prudential building that they had built? That's where she worked. And then from there, she went to IRS, internal revenue.

Q: And then she did Blue Cross Blue Shield, right?

A: No. She was IRS for a long time, and then she retired.

M: This is quite the career.

A: So now we live here, and a block down is 22. And there's a

big building here. So she's going, walks down there, "I don't know what that big building is down there." So she walks in, and it's government, it's the war department. So she goes back again, she says, "I want to apply for a job." They picked her up, from the time when she was at IRS, her pension and everything, everything was retroactive. So she used to walk to -- so now she's in the war department, and she had 22 women under her, and she had the authority to sign contracts up to a million dollars. She was doing very, very well. But once our funeral business -- I said, "Pat, who's going to do this paperwork?" It would have been better if she'd stayed there; we'd have been making more money if we put somebody here. So that was it, she finally quit there and came home, and she does our paperwork.

Q: OK. So the funeral parlor in Litman -- it was in Newark at the time.

A: No, Irving. Once I started to work for them, another phase of it, they says, "If you come and work for us, we will pay you, but we will also give you the funeral home to do your own funerals." This was a godsend. In other words, everything that I made was profit. I didn't have to pay rent, I didn't have to pay electric, I didn't have to pay anybody, and it worked great until this day. Now,

unfortunately, it caught up with me, so they said, wait a minute, our overhead -- just for the sake of argument is like \$100,000 a year. You do so many funerals, why don't we split this per funeral? We do 100 funerals, you do 30, you pay 30% and we'll pay the other. So now I have to pay, which is more than fair.

Q: Sure, because things have changed.

A: Of course. The taxes on that building we have now is \$22,000 a year, just that.

Q: Let's see. What year did you marry?

A: I think it was in 1950. Right around in 1950 or '51.

Q: Well, I think you've covered -- give us some idea about a picture of the flavor of the traditions and the culture and the contributions of the Newark community, life in Newark.

A: Well, whatever I tell you, you've heard.

Q: That's OK. Everybody has a different perspective.

A: We were always in one another's house. The children. Now you say, see, now, if the parents were working, if the mother was there, always, if they ate, you ate. Always. If you got hurt, somebody came into the house. Moreso, especially the two buildings, 91 and 93, that was like one family, let alone -- the Giovannises, the Juvelises, the

[Blahakes]. More --

Q: Patims?

A: No, no. We lived next door to -- now there's another one. We lived right next door to Patims.

Q: See, (inaudible) --

A: Yeah, we lived right next door, but we were up higher, 141. Now, there was -- they took care of me, mostly, because I was young, real young. When my sister Sophie wasn't around, their father had a shoe store right across the street, and I would go and sit in the shoe store with them, with Jimmy and Nicky. And then one time, somehow they got their hands on a phonograph, and you wind it, it was this high, and we were playing it in the shoe store. So the father says one day, why don't you give it to him, so they gave it to me and I took it next door, I took it up to my house, and we used to play with it, the kids, because we didn't have it, we didn't have a radio, we didn't have anything. So we used to play the phonograph that we got from the Patims. But I was next door, up at Mrs. Patim, every time they ate, I ate. Very close, our families. Very close. They saw little of my mother, because -- so did we. But they saw a lot of us. A lot of me, anyway, because I was much younger. And now you go down further, now you had the other -- we worked side by

side on West Market Street, but about two blocks above. Then they were down below, and it was '91 and '93, and that's where they were all grouped right in. That was even closer. They were only three floors up and three floors in, so they were always -- Paulie Giovannis was here, he was living with his grandmother, and he was over here with his mother, somebody, the Blahakes were here, they were living -- what's his name, Johnny [Carabata], they lived there. Of course, they can tell you even better. I was always there, when I finally moved out to West Market, it was right next door to them. I was always there, but I wasn't really part of the gang, because I was the -- I wasn't in the same house. I was the house right next to it. We were always together, but they were always -- they would eat in each other's houses, where me, rarely.

Q: Who owned the buildings?

A: It was Mayor Koch's father.

Q: Really?

M: Is that right? Mayor Koch?

A: Yeah. He owned those two buildings, 91 and 93. His name was Koch. I found this out later on, much later on. Mine, the house I lived in was owned by Mr. [Vasidi], Italian, and he lived up the street, and he had a gorgeous --

M: (inaudible), it was a candy store --

A: No, no. Vasidi, he was -- he didn't work, he was a well-educated Italian. Well-educated, well-dressed. He had a dining room, beautiful. When I used to bring him the rent, man, he had a nice -- he used to write out the receipt, give me my five cents, and back again.

Q: How much was the rent?

A: That was a little bit more expensive. We were paying \$32 a month, and my mother would give it religiously, but she was still working. But by that time, she was working most of -- she did most of the -- she paid the rent. The rest of us were on our own. I was working at the Paramount, we were getting clothes, we bought our own clothes, we did everything. We very rarely had dinner together, because we were never there together.

M: The Paramount Food Market was in the middle of the block, right?

A: The Paramount Food Market was '93, '91? Then the cigar store -- then our building, and next to our building, there was another building, and there was Paramount Food. But down further, there was more, and there were more Greeks down here. The Dillons lived down this way, I believe. The Dillons and -- Mike [Stellos'] wife, I forgot what her

maiden name was, she lived there, down below. But they were still almost on the same block.

M: Now, Tony [Stakis] had the barber shop --

A: Yeah, down further, on the corner. More down, towards Broad Street. Down in that direction. But it was still on that block. And then on that corner was a bakery.

M: Right. American Bakery was on the corner.

A: Yeah. And that was Henry Street right here.

M: Henry Street was the corner, right.

A: Yeah, right on the corner.

Q: What about -- what traditions did you have? What happened at Easter time, what happened at Christmas?

A: Well, we always, no matter how bad we were, Easter time, we were always in the church. Always. Oh, wait a minute. When I was going to Central Avenue, the Central Avenue School, my Greek books here, and at 4:00, I was in church, at the Greek school.

Q: At St. Demetrius.

A: Yeah, at Greek school, until 6:00, and then home.

M: Five days a week? Every day?

A: Yeah. Every Friday, the priest would come and preach to us and what not. But always -- now here's again, I would be

there my sister Mary, but not Sophie. Sophie would go to St. Nicholas, because she had made all of her friends there. So we would go religiously. Greek school, it was unheard of not to go. I was going to Greek school on Bank Street. What was I, seven years old? (Greek) That's what the teachers taught me.

Q: That's so cute.

A: And you know the irony, she was such a nice woman, and then years went past, years and years. Then one day, someone calls me to handle the funeral, and I put the name down and all, and then we buried the lady. And who do I find out that it was (inaudible), the teacher, and I didn't know it was her. Of course, I never knew her real name, [Kiamaria], we used to call her. And I never knew it was her.

Q: How about Easter? What did you do at Easter time?

A: Always -- well, Easter, we would have it at home, my mother would try to get us together, or we would go to my grandmother's house and have something there, because my grandmother -- they had a big kitchen, and she had -- there was like a couch, and that's where we always, even my brother, you go in there, one of us would be laying there. She was like our second home, my grandmother. And then of course I was -- I know for a fact I was 15 years old when

she passed away, and Rotundo buried her, and we went to the funeral and whatnot.

Q: When did -- did you go to church for example Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday afternoon, for the --

A: We never went to church, the children, when we were older. Almost never.

Q: Younger.

A: Yeah. Well, younger or older. But we would go on the holidays, and when St. Demetrius used to rent the church on High Street, remember that, because the church was too small? Well, the church at that time was too small. So, what was it, St. Paul the Apostle? I believe it's still there, on the corner of High Street and West Market, right where -- and they would rent that church at Easter time, because it was much bigger. We would go there, and then we would walk around the block, even sometimes when the church was down further, we would actually walk around the block at Easter time.

Q: That was on the corner (inaudible) hotel?

A: Yes. Right, exactly. Right on that corner. Every year they used to rent that church. Now, I don't know if they rented it when we were on Bank Street or when we were on New Street -- I think when it was New Street, they had -- it was

big enough. I think maybe when we were on Bank Street, they rented it, because they didn't have the facilities.

M: That's interesting. I forgot that.

A: But actually, religion, very little. When I was young, yeah, my grandmother, by the hand, always in the church. But as we got older, very rarely would we go to church. Very rarely.

M: How about dances, and --

A: Dances? Yes, I went to almost -- even single, every Greek dance that we had, yeah, I was always there. Always. In fact, that's how I met my wife, at one of the dances.

Q: When Adams had the theater and brought in all these shows, he would bring them to some of the Greek dances? Do you remember --

A: Yeah, but very rarely. Very rarely. He brought them in when we had, in Broad Street, what was it, the [Mas] Ballroom, they were running bond drive during the war, that's just before I went in. So one day, they pulled some of the ushers out, and they says, "You're going to go and pick up some of the important people." So what do you think I did? I had an old [jump]. They said, "All right, you're going to go up to Center Street, and you're going to go -- and there's a car there and you pick it up. So I go up to

Center Street, and the house is still there where Adams lived. And I had an old Packard, and I pull in, and there's a nice, brand-new Lincoln over here. Oh, "Where do I go?" "You're going to go to the Copacabana and pick up Frank Sinatra." You don't -- (laughter) I'm going with a Lincoln, a brand-new Lincoln, a nice green, a dark green one. So I went to the Copacabana in New York, I picked up Frank Sinatra, and he was with a comedian, and I brought him here, and then he showed up at the thing, and I waited for him and he came out, I put him back in and took him back in Copacabana. So I'm ready to go again, and they said, "No, we got everybody now." So I didn't have to make -- so I had to go back up and drop the car off at all.

M: Did he talk to you at all?

A: No, I didn't see him at all. The car was there, the keys, and I went.

Q: But Frank Sinatra, did he speak to you?

A: No. He just talked to the guy in back. Steely or something, there was a comedian by that name. Steely or something like that. But like I remember -- do you remember [Donald], Donald want to buy a duck? The comedian, he used to have a duck all the time. But we had -- when we were at the Adams theater, we had -- what's his name, [Kid Kaiser],

you want to lead a band, I think. So what he would do is, "All right, who wants to lead a band?" And then everybody raised their hand, and "All right, you come up." So we had all our friends. Get a white handkerchief. Now, the white handkerchief, give us a break. So the white handkerchief, we're waving the white handkerchief, come up here. And our own friends would go up there, and they would give us the baton, we had a lot of things -- Pete [Petrellis] has some of that stuff, because he was the doorman at the Paramount. He collected tickets. So I said, oh, you collect tickets, how long you going to be -- so they used to cut it, give them half. So now you're watching friends come in, be saving some of the tickets. So (inaudible) the tickets and I'd give them to a friend. A friend come walking in, I have the ticket, all right, yup, yup. (laughter) Adams one day, he always had a nice tan when he would come from Florida. So we had a meeting, and we'd be lined up -- have you ever been in the Paramount theater, the mezzanine on the second floor? So he's got a cigar, something like this. And so, "I see where no money, the tickets. What son of a bitch is giving tickets? If Jesus Christ comes down, you ask me if he can go in." (laughter) And he's holding the cigar, and he's got the women there, the cleaning women and all that, everybody, all the ushers lined up talking to us.

M: (laughter) That's a good story.

Q: Where did you -- when you served in the Armed Forces, where did you serve?

A: I served down -- I was at Fort Dix, of course, for a short time, and then they shipped me down to Texas, which was an armor division. Because I was dumb, I was working at the airport at that time, in fact that's why they gave me the job back when I went down. So they says to me, "What kind of work did you do?" I said, "Well," which was true, they used to bring in these half tracks, with the -- I never knew what that -- I says, "I used to drive some of those things," the thing -- like a dummy, you know, you'd think I would have said, well, I only drove the ushers, the chauffeurs around, so they'd give me a nice job. So they give me that one, and before I know it, I'm down in Texas with the armor division. We're supposed to have tanks; we didn't have any, because they hadn't made them for us yet. So we're doing with Jeeps and back and forth. So finally, we got the tanks. I was there a little bit more than a year, it was almost two years, a year and a half. So finally we got the tanks, and then, OK, what job, you're going to do this? Well, I've been driving -- all right, you're going to be a tank driver. The tanks we had were brand new, but they were

light, because we were supposed to be like tank destroyers, we were supposed to be able to travel fast. So we were in this heavy loaded with iron steel, with the ones in the front where -- now, but on the side, it had two big nuts, bolts, and they were just loose. Now, what happens in combat, we take the bolt off, take the washer out, and we put the steel plate in, because each steel plate had a hole. And you just hook it in, and then you put this washer back on and tighten the bolt. And this way, we were protected at least against 50 calibers or 37 millimeters that can penetrate. So we were cleaning -- that's all you did was clean the darned things. So one day, I'm standing -- now, you know, the driver has a spring here, and if you press the button, the seat will come up so that you can at least look outside. Well, I did what I had to do inside, and then I'm standing now up on the top of the tank. And I'm standing this way, and the stupid gunner is inside. Now, for the cannon to move, it's got like a pistol grip here. He just turns it and it will turn that way. And he turns it this way, now he looks through a scope like this, and he could see -- so now he's doing something, and he's turning it. And I'm standing here, (inaudible), nothing. But as it comes, standing there, it pushes me. So I go to jump, and my foot goes between the washer, and I go like this, and

down here is a 50-caliber machinegun being cleaned in this other tripod. So I straddle with my back like this.

(inaudible) hollering, what's the matter? They pulled the gun out, and I'm laying there, he says, "Well, get up." I says, "I can't. I can't move." So I was paralyzed, completely paralyzed from here down. I says, "I can't move. I can't do anything." "Move your hands." "I can't move my hands." "All right, take him to the hospital." So they take me to the hospital, and they're checking me, they're taking the x-rays. Little by little, I started to come back. So they had me in the hospital for I don't know how long. So finally, I'm ready, I was up walking, but I was dragging my left leg, I kept dragging it. So finally I said, "Well, let me go back to the company, I can do something." "No, no," they says, "your company moved out already. They went up in Washington State." They were gone, ready to be shipped over, I guess. So they tried to send me here, and then I'd got the back, I couldn't move, they sent me to what they call a replacement depot. But in the meantime, they were supposed to give me my gas --

(inaudible) to show that I had taken that. Then I was supposed to have the rifle range, I had done that when I was with the armor division, we had done all that. So I had nothing to do. I was in Florida, I'm laying in the sun all

day long. All day long. So finally, they called me into the office, and there's a major there, he says, "Soldier," he says, "we know you ruined two of your vertebrae in the back," he says, "and it needs an operation. We can't do it for you now, because now that we're bring soldiers over that were really hurt bad," he says, "we're going to have to discharge you." All right, they discharged me. So now I was in the bed, so I get a little -- here comes a woman with the little red cross. She says, she's taking my name, she says, "You know, you're entitled to a pension when you get out." I said, "Well, I don't know," what did I know, I was 20 years old, 21. She says, "Don't worry." So, all right, when I got discharged, I went to visit Pete [Petrellis], he was down further in Florida. And when I went, I couldn't sit up, so on the train, the conductor laid me on a couch, and I stayed on the couch all the way home. So when I get up there, there's a check there for \$37 for my pension. Believe it, until this day, I think it's \$128 now, and I've been getting it all these years. I should -- if I'd put it in the bank, I should have been worth like a million dollars. (laughter) I bought telephone stocks with it, I'd be worth a couple of hundred thousands dollars. It was \$36 or \$38, and it went to \$41 and \$42, and then the first time --

Q: Did you ever have the operation?

A: Oh, then I came back, and you know, I used to have an argument with --

End of Michael Paskas Tape 1

A: So I got discharged, and I came home, and again, my mother -- we went to one doctor, and he was going to do his, and he put me in a cast, and that didn't work. He said, "Well, we've got to pray to God now." I said, "God's not going to fix my back." So my mother (inaudible), and we went to the doctor, and he told me -- he put me on the table. He went to raise my leg almost at the ceiling. He says, "Get off. You're going to New York." I said, "What do you mean I'm going?" "You're going to go see Dr. [Lanjunis] in New York." I says -- now, in the meantime, I'm walking like this. OK. I go out there and I see this Dr. Lanjunis, he puts me on the table, does the same thing. "OK. Get off. Be ready. When I call you, you're going to come to the hospital." Like about four or five days later, which we never had a telephone until we came out of the Army, so the phone rings, and it's him, he says, "Come out, and bring your shaving stuff with you." So I go out there, and (inaudible). So he comes out, and he looks around, he pulls me out and he takes me inside. Like two days later, they

operated on my back. Now, again, like (inaudible), what the hell -- people say you're crazy, you're going to get crippled. How much crippled can I be? So I go in, they operate on me, (inaudible) in bed for a while, a couple of days later, I started to feel a little bit better, and then a little bit better; I got up and I'm walking around. So one day, I'm sitting in the bed, people come with cameras and big lights and everything, and they says, "You mind if we take your picture?" "No, go ahead." So he comes in, and he says, "We tried something new," he says, "and now it seems to be working, and we'd like to show --" It was supposed to go in some kind of --

Q: Medical, right.

A: What they did is, because they saw the way it had happened, they put four screws in my back, in the vertebrae, down this way. It was this way and then two this way. To this day, when they take x-rays, they say, "What are those things?" Those two screws. Well, would you believe like a week later I was out driving my car, I was running, and I -- for 40 years, I had no problem. For 40 years. Picking up dead people, we were on an ambulance, I used to pick up people on the second floor and bring them down. We pick up heavy caskets, nothing. And then after about 40 years or so, I

started to have a problem. I go back out to New York, he's not there anymore, of course, but they introduced me to another doctor, Dr. [Santhellis]. And he operated on me, and then I was supposed to stay for a week, ten days or something. So the next -- I laid on my back for one day. The next day, I get up, I'm walking back and forth. So now I'm inside, I'm shaving, and a nurse comes in, "How are you feeling?" I said, "Pretty good." It's a Thursday. Friday, here she comes, I'm shaving, so I says -- I don't know, she says something, how are you feeling, I says, "I feel fine." She says, "Well, you'd better get dressed, because tomorrow, your wife is going to pick you up Saturday." I says, "No, I'm not supposed to leave until Tuesday." She says, "They turned you in." I said, "What do you mean they turned me in?" They turned me in to the insurance company, because I was walking around, (inaudible) the hospital, and they threw me out, and thank God --

Q: Who was this second guy? Santhellis?

A: Yeah, Santhellis or something.

Q: Santhellis. He's -- I mean, he's young --

A: Yes, he was young. I guess he still is; this was only about ten years ago.

Q: He's the head of ortho -- he does all of the sports --

A: Yes. Yeah, he was --

Q: Oh, yeah. John Santhellis.

A: Yeah, he had the -- not the Devils, no -- the (inaudible), he was wearing the ring.

Q: Yeah, he does all of the sports figures, the orthopedic surgery.

A: They had Dr. Nicholas, I was going to go to him first. He's the one that did the -- he had the Giants, or he had the Jets team. But I saw his son, and (inaudible), but they only do shoulders or something like that. So then they recommended his nurse --

Q: John Santhellis (inaudible)?

A: No, I think he took me to the hospital of special surgery at that time, I don't know. So he'd got a little office in New York, it looks like an apartment house or a building, and he's got -- you open the door and you walk in, on the first floor.

Q: He's got so much money, it --

A: Sure, because he said he had left, and he went up to Washington or someplace to ski with his children, way back then.

M: So how do you feel now? Do you feel OK?

A: Yeah. Every once in awhile, I get a little kink, and I've learned to live with it. I bend over for a while, like a crab, and gradually it wears off.

Q: This is terrific. Any other little stories that you could give us?

A: That's about it.

Q: Was there any --

A: Some of the stories, I don't think -- I could tell them to him, but some of the stories -- (laughter)

M: That's OK.

A: No. Honestly, mostly joking.

Q: Any involvement -- any contributions to the American community?

A: No. For a while, I was appointed on the mayor's commission of group relations in Newark by Mayor Carlin. And that's when they put those new apartment houses up that are going down now. And our job was to go there and try to mingle with the people there and show them, because they had a PhD, a woman there, and she says, "We have to teach them how to use this equipment," the shower and the bathtubs, things like that. We had to teach them. They would get the groups together and show them what has to be done. But they were

using the tubs for garbage and things like that. That's why to this day, now they're knocking them down. That was a big mistake; that should never have gone up.

Q: Which apartments were these?

A: The projects. By the church, by St. Nicholas Church.

Q: Oh, was that the [Stella Wright] projects? No.

A: No, Stella Wright, that's (inaudible) highway. But there's about --

Q: Behind St. Nicholas.

A: Behind St. Nicholas, right. When you go down, you see them all. But little by little now they're demolishing them. Remember (inaudible)

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: He's the one at St. Nicholas where it is today. He's the one. He --

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: -- every Jewish church all the way down the line. I used to work -- there's another gentleman -- I used to work in the [Bene Jeshua] on their holidays selling tickets, passing out tickets. There was a funeral director, a Jewish funeral director, on Clinton Avenue. And he hired me, and every Jewish holiday I would go there, and he would pay me to pass

out the tickets. But I remember that --

Q: Pass out the tickets so people could go into the
(inaudible)?

A: Yeah, they had to buy tickets.

Q: That's right, they do have to do that.

A: Yeah. So this (inaudible) came to us, I remember, and he says, "You people should be proud of yourselves, that you're staying and you're going to buy a nice piece of land, and we're going to give you this and we're going to give you that." And then they sold it, and there was no break with that piece of land, where we paid, what, \$100 a square foot, \$37,000 or \$47,000. Or \$72,000, if I'm not mistaken. That's until this -- you know what, if I could find it, I have a picture drawn by [Bill Tragodis], a rendering of what we would have had with St. Nicholas if they had -- he has a pool in the back of the church, and what do you think, he's got a building over here that was going to be the American Legion building. We were going to --

Q: I think I remember --

A: Do you remember that? I don't know if I could find it --

Q: Well, see what you can find.

A: It's this big.

M: (inaudible)

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

A: -- real nice, that's what would have been St. Nicholas in those days. But it turned out -- now -- did you get your letter? I got a letter, they want to, you know --

Q: But I'll tell you, what I heard, and it's upset me, I think we should all be down there for -- yeah, I'm sorry --

A: Yes.

End - Michael Paskas